CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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THE APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.
50X1 (FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

28 Nov 1955

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General

1. The synthetic fuel plant at Blachownia Slaska (Blechhammer) (N 50-22, E 1[illegible], 50X1 is located between the Gliwice Canal and the railroad line to Kedzierzyn (Heydebreck), Slawecice (Ehrenforst), Labedy (Laband), and Gliwice (Gleiwitz).

2. The plant is not scheduled to become a hydrogenation plant again. Plans call for the building of an industry in the area which will process various raw materials.

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3. Following dismantling, nothing could be utilized. The plant area resembled a totally bombed-out territory. The Polish Government recently dug out underground pipelines and electric cables in order to use them for the reconstruction of Warsaw.

Benzol Distillation Unit

4. The only section in production at the plant is the benzol distillation unit which is a Koppers system installed by the Poles. The daily capacity is 250 tons of raw benzol which is being distilled into refined benzol, toluol, and xylol. Particular importance is placed on the production of pure toluol. The raw benzol is being supplied by the neighboring coke plants, particularly that in Nowa Huta, in cisterns.

5. Part of the plant production is being distributed and part is pumped into huge reserve tanks of the national petroleum company. These containers, of which there are five with a capacity of 1,000 cubic meters each, are located within the plant area. The tanks are sunk into earth girds which are over one meter thick; they are not covered with earth on top.

6. Surveillance is made by personnel of the petroleum company who wear dark blue uniforms with bright blue collar patches. The insigne resembles a medieval gun bullet spraying out flame.

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Power

7. The plant is provided with power from Gliwice. Thus far there is only one transformer station. Interruptions of power supply and of light are numerous. While work was being carried on with welding machines, informant noticed oscillations in the current.

8. The power station attached to the plant is entirely out of commission; there are neither steam boilers nor machinery. Steam is supplied by two auxiliary boilers which do not meet requirements.

9. A large transformer station is under construction. The work is being carried out by the firm Elektromontaz.[1] The foreman of the construction work is Guenther Batan who supervised construction of the tar distillation unit.

Tar Distillation Units

10. The tar distillation unit was scheduled to go into operation in October 1954 but constant damage to the tube lines during construction made this impossible. The damage was caused by inadequate tools. In addition, there was often a shortage of oxygen or gas for the welding instruments. The oxygen plant at Kedzierzyn was too small to provide the necessary amounts. There were many leakages in the welding seams because old tubing was used. Finally, there was no welding wire and fence wire lying around the plant area had been used.

11. Machine parts and pumps were obtained from VEB Chemische Maschinenbauwerke Rudisleben in East Germany. The most important pumps were three standing vacuum pumps. The pumps were never given a preliminary test and the attempt to put them into action lasted, with constant damage to the bearings, 14 days. The test run had to be interrupted various times because of a shortage of lubricants.

12. Maximum capacity of the plant was fixed at 250 tons a day. However, only the tar which had been furnished by the foundry at Nowa Huta was pumped into circulation because the gas line from Zabrze had not been entirely completed. The tar was stored in six reserve containers located behind the distillation unit. Three of the containers held 500 cubic meters and three 1,000 cubic meters. The containers were surrounded by a concrete wall 20 centimeters thick.

13. The tar is to be distilled into the following:

a. Light oil
b. Carbol oil
c. Washing oil
d. Naphtalin oil
e. Anthracene I
f. Anthracene II
g. Pitch residue

14. Production data are not available.

15. A unit is under construction for the utilization of tar residue for paving streets. The unit has not been completed.

16. A hall with large iron vats for naphtalin and anthracene crystallization has been completed.

17. The "raw" construction of a second tar distillation unit with the capacity of the first unit has also been completed. Machine parts were supplied by East Germany but various items were taken from the supply to replace defective parts in the first unit. The tube furnace which exploded in the first unit will be replaced by the one which was slated for the second unit.[2]

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18. Informant states that the fact that the Poles show an extreme interest in the completion of the tar distillation plant is significant in itself. It is known that the industrial utilization of tar has been highly inadequate whereas benzol production has been normal. The largest tar distillation plant heretofore has been the Hajduki plant which is both smaller and more primitive than Blachownia. Technicians delegated as experts from Hajduki to Blachownia showed themselves awkward in handling the new machinery; they had little orientation. It can be said beyond any doubt that the Blachownia plant is the most modern of its kind in Europe. There is only one identical installation, namely, the Gaswerke Nuernberg.

19. With a daily capacity of 250 tons of tar and a second installation with the same capacity to be completed shortly, the plant stands definitely first, not only in Poland. For comparison, it may be pointed out that the largest tar plant in the Ruhr, the Carolinenglueck Bergbau A.G. at Bochum, has a production of only 200 tons a day. The Ruhr plant is larger in size than Blachownia but Blachownia is constructed more economically. Here, in contrast to German plants of an older date, the entire installation is concentrated within a narrow space. Thus, during the winter the gas lines do not cool off as in more extended plants.

50X1 1. Comment: Presumably the State Construction Enterprise for Electric Power Plants.

50X1 2. Cf. from the

Distribution of Attachment (memory sketch of the Blachownia plant with inscriptions in German):

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